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POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

The Middle Miles and Other Poems, by Lee Wilson Dodd.
Yale University Press.

This book of quiet poems has a certain grace and charm. Its soft music conveys the soliloquies, the patterned meditations, of a man sensitive to the more delicate aspects of comedy and pathos. Neither the tragic nor the comic is here, but the smile and the sigh are sincere, and the voice has a low sweet resonance. The poet's light touch, his individual way of saying things, and his sense of the permeating and underlying humor of this earthly scheme, make him a good companion.

His subjects are varied, but nearly all are chosen from modern life. Even *Maitre Arouet's Complaint* is not only a vivid sketch of Voltaire—as his own father sees him—but suggestive of many another wayward son of genius who

bleeds quicksilver
From any casual scratch.

The Lament of a New England Art Student, *Mirella Dances*, *Was It a Leaf?* and others are also studies of temperament; the war brings out a few protests, and a number of poems, especially *The Temple*, probe into the mystery of life. Indoor poems all, no doubt; poems of “a scholar and a gentleman,” but a real man nevertheless.

The book suffers from a helter-skelter succession of subjects, and a confusing arrangement of page-headings, though certain details of make-up, especially the paper cover, are in excellent taste. Some of its best poems are familiar to our readers. Here is a new one, *Night Armies*:

New Books of Verse

The street is gray with rain,
The gutters run surcharged. All night
I heard war-chariots sweep the plain
In one long-rolling wave of fight.
Now it is dawn, and I can see
No battle wreck, no littered plain:
Where do wild night-armies flee?—
The street is gray with rain.
And down the street an ash-cart jolts
Ponderous, and I turn away. . . .
God, how the ghost in man revolts
Against the day!

H. M.

The Jew to Jesus and Other Poems, by Florence Kiper
Frank: Mitchell Kennerley.

With this modern Jewess intense vitality and passionate conviction demand utterance in a kind of solemn chant, as with some of the ancient prophetesses of her race. She was born too late for Deborah's heroic simplicity of mood and divine splendor of lyricism, but something of Deborah's spirit is in her.

The book is largely juvenilia, and even the best things in it are more remarkable for their promise of power than for what they actually achieve. One feels the drive of a big nature in them, of a passion for beauty and justice which forces the muses' citadel, and rebukes them for idling, and lays violent hands on their banners. The poet's fervor becomes really lyric in triumphant moments; again, when the power wanes, it spends itself in more or less rhythmic eloquence.

The well-known sonnet, *The Jew to Jesus*, published six or eight years ago in *The Century*, is a tender expression of